

S H O O H I K U
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"AKUTAROH"

One Act

Written by Shiho Okamura

to be presented by Ennosuke Ichikawa with
his Troupe at the Tokyo Theater from
Aug. 7th to Aug. 31st 1946

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Synopsis:

A heavy drinker, Akutaroh was strong and outrageous like a wicked Samurai. One day he forced his way into his uncle's house under the influence of liquor. The uncle shaved his hair off while he was asleep. After having awaked Akutaroh gradually thinks what he has been and comes to feel uneasy thinking of the fruit of his evil deeds. He begins to dance striking the gong feeling as if he himself were a priest.

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C.C.D. J-2034



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Akutaroh's uncle, Matsunojo appears accompanied by his
servant Taro.

Matsunojo: I am living in this neighbourhood. I have a nephew who
is a heavy drinker and always gives troubles to others
under the influence of liquor. I often reprovod him for
his bad manners in vain. Today I intend to consult with
my servant to make the best of the bad affair. Say, Taro!
(Taro comes forwards)

Taro: Well, what can I do for you?

Matsunojo: As you know my nephew is a heavy and quarrelsome
drinker and is called "Akutaroh" (Akutaroh means
rascal) I want to take some measures to make him
stop drinking. What do you say to it?

Taro:

Taro: As you say many persons have troubles on account of his vicious drinking. Therefore I think you had better do as we arranged the other day.

Matsunojo: Well. Now have you prepared those things?

Taro: Yes, I have.

(takes out a rosary.)

Matsunojo: Well. He would perhaps give up drinking.

Taro: I am sure we shall succeed.

Matsunojo: Now, let's go.

Taro: Certainly

(The two exit behind the curtain at the entrance of the stage passage. Akutaroh's voice comes within hearing.)

Akutaroh: Oh, I have got quite intoxicated!

(He appears with heavy eyes walking with unsteady gait under the influence of liquor. He is carrying a halbert with his hair waving by the evening wind. Soon he arrives at the main stage.)

Akutaroh: Oh, I have become dead drunk, though I didn't think I would overcome with liquor. I can't almost walk for the road looks very complicated. I should like to have some fellow-traveller. I shall wait for somebody taking a rest.

(He takes a rest leaning upon the halberd. Thereupon he sees a priest passing over there. Soon the priest, Chiren appears to the stage wearing a black robe with a rosary and a gong in the hands.)

Akutaroh: Say, priest!

Chiren: What?

Akutaroh: Where are you going?

Chiren: I have come from Nishi-ohmi. Now I am going to visit a certain temple at Higashi-Ohmi.

Akutaroh: What! Is Nishi-ohmi Higashi-ohmi?

Chiren: No, I have come from Nishi-ohmi and I am going to Higashi-ohmi.

Akutaroh: Are you going to Higashi-ohmi having come from Nishi-ohmi?

Chiren: Yes.

Akutaroh: Then, I will accompany you.

Chiren: You seem to be a samurai. We should become ill-matched fellow-travellers, as I am a priest. Therefore, excuse me for my going on ahead of you a minute.

Akutaroh: Do you intend to refuse my proposal?

Chiren: No. I said so only because we should be unbecoming.

(Chiren tries to escape but Akutaroh stops him)

Akutaroh: What! **O**Ill-matched company?

There is a word "priestly samurai". A priest and a samurai must be on good terms. At any rate, I will go with you.

Chiren: In that case, please go ahead of me.

Akutaroh: No, the priest ought not to be an attendant. You must go ahead.

Chiren: Then, I will go first. You had better come with me.

(Chiren is about to go when Akutaroh stops him threatening with the halbert.)

Akutaroh: Say, priest! Wait a bit.

Chiren: What is it?

Akutaroh: What a naughty bearing you have while I am going to accompany you! Go ahead if you want!

(Akutaro threatens Chiren with the halbert raised overhead tottering under the influence of liquor.)

Chiren: Ah! Pardon me, please.

Akutaroh: Ha, ha, ha. It's a fun.

Chiren: What a terrible fun!

Akutaroh: Now go ahead please.

(Chiren begins to walk fearing the halbert.)

Akutaroh: By the way where have you come from and where are you going?

Chiren: From Nishi-ohmi to Higashi-ohmi.

Akutaroh: Well, I see. Is this way of carrying the halbert quick or slow?

Chiren: I don't know, as I am a priest.

Akutaroh: Shall I wield the halbert?

Chiren: No, enough!

(Akutaroh couches the halbert and waves it about in all directions. He himself turns round and round, and at last falls on his bottom. Chiren seems to feel uneasy.)

Akutaroh: I can't practise well on account of intoxication.

By the way where are you going and where have you come from?

Chiren: From Nishi-ohmi to Higashi-ohmi.

Akutaroh: Oh, I remember. Then I have something to ask to you. Won't you listen to me?

Chiren: I don't know what you are going to ask to me, but I have nothing to offer you for I am a poor priest as you see.

Akutaroh: No, I should like to ask you humbly.

Chiren: What do you ask?

Akutaroh: A thing.

Chiren: A thing?

(He feels a vague apprehension stealing over him.)

Akutaro: I should like to hear your talk.

Chiren: What do you mean?

Akutaro: Let ~~me~~ listen to your talk about the practice of religious austerities.

(Chiren seems to feel relieved.)

Chiren: Oh, that's an easy thing. I am ready to talk. Instead of it, will you please excuse me from going together with you?

Akutaro: Well, I see. You had better do as you like if only you let me hear your story.

Chiren: Then, I will.

Nagauta Reciting: As you know I am as poor as a church mouse.

I made up my mind to go on a pilgrimage and visited many old temples and places of historic interest. It was very interesting and I came to understand that the life of an itinerant priest was full of peace and comfort in company with the beauties of nature such as spring red flowers, green willows in early summer along a river and the beautiful moon in a autumnal night.

Akutaro: Oh, it's very interesting.

Chiren: Well, let me release now.

Akutaro: No, now listen to my story about halbert.

Chiren: Again halbert? I must be going now.

Akutaro: Don't say such a thing. When I pass a cup of sake to you, you must return it to me. Listen to me anyhow.

(Chiren is obliged to remain)

Nagauta Reciting: Now here comes Benkei dressed in a splendid and majestic armour carrying a big and long halbert. The figure seems so commanding that even Satan may shrink.

Akutaro: Thereupon a samurai named Kagekiyo appears

Nagauta Reciting: Kagekiyo gives his name and comes face to face with Benkei. Benkei confronts him and presents a definite attitude couching the halbert.

(Akutaro acts suitably to the Nagauta Reciting)

Chiren: Oh, it's interesting! Now I must be going.

Akutaro: Well, you may.

Chiren: Good-bye.

Akutaro: Good-bye.

(Chiren feels relieved and goes away in a hurry)

Akutaro: an interesting contest. It was a good diversion.

Now where shall I go?

(Akutaro gets lost in thought, thereupon Matsunojo and his servant Taro make their appearance.)

Matsunojo: Oh, here you are!

Taro: We have been looking for you.

Akutaro: Oh, uncle! Just I was going to visit you.

Matsunojo: Is that so? Now I have come to give good talking to you.

Akutaro: What! Good talking?

Taro: You seem to have drunk again, don't you?

Akutaro: Are you going to serve me with sake?

Matsunojo: No, I am not. You seem to be in high spirits under the influence of liquor.

Akutaro: Of course I am. Look at this halbert.

(pushes out the halbert. The two step back fearfully.)

Matsunojo: Wait a moment.

Akutaroh: I bought this halbert at a certain shop. The guard the grip and the shaft.....

(pushes out towards Taro)

Akutaroh: It's a fine piece in every point, isn't it?

(waves the halbert right and left. The two shrink back for fear.)

Matsunojo: Really, it's a masterpiece. But you must not touch another.

Akutaroh: Well, I never.

Taro: Be careful not to injure another.

Akutaroh: Never mind. But let me show you how I use the halbert.

Matsunojo: Enough! You need not.

Akutaroh: In that case, I should like to see your dance, dear uncle.

Matsunojo: What! Dance?

Akutaroh: Please dance a bit in high spirits.

Taro: He is not in high spirits. Do you again put such a difficult question?

Akutaroh: No difficult. Anyhow please dance at once.

Or shall I practice the halbert?

Matsunojo: No, enough! What shall I do?

Then, Taro, wont you dance together with me?

Taro: Well, it cannot be helped.

Akutaroh: Now dance, please.

(Matsunojo and Taro dance an interesting dance to a folk-song. Akutaroh is greatly delighted with their dance but soon falls asleep lying down his head resting on his arm.)

Matsunojo: Now let's break off as we have danced enough.

Taro: Oh, he has fallen asleep while we were dancing.

Matsunojo: Now let's do as previously arranged taking advantage of this opportunity.

Taro: Well, I see.

Matsunojo: Be careful not to make him awake.

Taro: Never mind, master.

(The two secretly approach Akutaroh and shave his hair off. They put a priest's robe and a rosary by his head and take the halbert and the sword. Then they whisper with each other and get under cover. Soon the evening-bell comes within hearing and Akutaroh awakes with a yawn)

Akutaroh: Bring me a cup of tea. I want to drink tea (claps)

How soundly I slept!

(He looks around) Oh! Here is the road while I thought I slept at the inn. And moreover where are my halbert and sword? It's strange.

(A blast of the autumnal wind blows and makes him feel cold. Akutaroh puts his hand upon the head and gets surprised noticing that his head has been shaved.)

Akutaroh: Oh, my hair has been shaved off.

What on earth is the matter?

(He looks aside and finds the black priest's robe and the rosary instead of the halbert and sword. He begins to feel uneasy.)

Akutaroh: I don't believe that a robber might leave such things.

It's unaccountable. (He takes the rosary and it seems he cannot understand the matter. Thereupon a strange voice is heard.)

(Taro's voice): Say, Akutaroh!

Akutaroh: Yes, sir.

(Taro's voice): You have been a heavy drinker and always gave troubles ~~xx~~ others. Therefore from now you must enter the priesthood as a natural result of your evil deeds, and your name is "eternal Buddha"

Akutaroh: (prostrates himself)

Oh! Now I understand. It must be an oracle that makes me give up drinking and recover to my senses. I will obey the oracle without hesitation and practise religious austerities as a Buddhist. (dresses the robe and rises to his feet with the rosary.)

From now on my name is not Akutaroh, but "eternal Buddha".
(adores)

(Thereupon the sound of a gong comes within hearing and a voice is heard saying "I adore thee, O eternal Buddha".)
Oh, it's strange. Somebody is calling my name. I must reply. Yes sir.

(Chiren makes his apperance striking the gong.)

Chiren: I adore thee O eternal Buddha

Akutaroh: Yes sir.

Chiren: I adore thee O eternal Buddha

Akutaroh: Yes sir.

Chiren: Oh, it's strange. When I pray to Amidha Buddha he answers "yes sir". He must be a madman. Next I will try in another tone. I adore thee O eternal Buddha.

Akutaroh: It's strange! This time he calls my name in changed tune. In that case, I must reply in another tone.
Yes sir, yes sir.

(They begin to dance and come face to face.)

The two: Ha, ha, ha.

Chiren: Oh, you are the drunkard I met a little time ago.

Akutaroh: Oh, you are the priest. I am no longer the drunkard.

Chiren: What do you say? Your figure has changed but why
do you reply when I pray to Amidha Buddha?

Akutaroh: That is because "eternal Buddha" is my name. It was
given while I was asleep.

Chiren: What! Eternal Buddha? What an enviable and honourable
thing! Eternal Buddha means the way to Buddhism Paradise.

Akutaroh: Is that so?

Chiren: Now that you have been given such a worshipful name, you
had better enter the priesthood and practise austerities
as a Buddhist.

Akutaroh: Well, I ask you to give me a favourable guidance.

Chiren: First of all you had better say a Buddhist invocation.

Akutaroh: What is Buddhist invocation?

Chiren: If you forget it you had better call your name.

Akutaroh: O eternal Buddha!

Chiren: I adore thee O eternal Buddha.

Akutaroh: I adore thee O eternal Buddha.

Chiren: That's right.

(Nagauta reciting starts and the two dance praying
to Amidha Buddha. From the right side of the stage
Matsunojo and Taro appear in high spirits and dance
together with them.)

----- Curtain -----